

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I appreciate that very much. It is probably a good idea to set it aside at this time. We will have ample time later to discuss it.

Mr. DORGAN. I have no objection to it being set aside when others wish to offer amendments. I appreciate the cooperation of the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. GREGG. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. DORGAN. What is the objection to? There is no unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was no unanimous consent.

Mr. DORGAN. I don't believe there was a unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was no unanimous consent request propounded.

Mr. DORGAN. So there can be no objection to a unanimous consent request never made.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I was under the impression there was a unanimous consent request to set the amendment aside. I take it that did not occur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That request was not propounded. The Senator from North Dakota indicated he would not object if such a request were made.

Mr. GREGG. Then obviously I do not object.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, that is not set aside by unanimous consent.

There may be others in the Chamber who want to be heard concerning the highway bill. If that is not the case, I will go ahead and continue discussing this. It is our hope to go through it section by section. We are quite a ways along in doing that.

First, I will restate some of the comments I made in the past about this bill. We have spent in the committee an entire year working on this legislation. We have had numerous hearings on various environmental concerns, procedural concerns. We had State representation at hearings about many of the parts of the bill that will end up giving the States more responsibility to take care of some of their needs. We had a chance to talk about some of the problems voiced in the Senate.

As far as the position of the administration, I do not know what more we can do. We have gone through the objections they had, or the three statements they made, in terms of finding it not to be acceptable. These have been met.

We have serious infrastructure needs now. The State system is 50 years old; 32 percent of our major roads are in poor or remedial condition; 29 percent of the bridges are structurally deficient. I am more emotional regarding the 29 percent bridge figure because Oklahoma ranks No. 1. Missouri is No. 2 in percentage of bridges that are structurally deficient.

We have 36 percent of the Nation's urban rail vehicles and maintenance facilities in substandard or poor condition. And 29 percent of the Nation's bus fleet and maintenance facilities are in substandard condition. The list goes on.

I am particularly sensitive to this, having served for 8 years in the other body on the Environment and Public Works Committee, where we talked about this and watched this as the re-authorizations took place. I participated in both ISTEA and in TEA-21, in both cases, serving at that time in the other body.

I know the way things were done were a little distasteful for me, but we came up with three authorization bills. It is our hope to be deliberate and spend, as we have, a year in looking at all the problems, seeing what would be better than the system used before.

In the past, we had section 1104, minimum guarantees. That has been replaced by the Equity Bonus Program. The minimum guarantees were arbitrary, politically driven percentages each State had. It was the thought that when you get to the point where you have enough votes to pass it, you did not care. We did not want to do that. So we took into consideration the donor status of States, we took into consideration the rapid growing States, States such as Texas, California, Nevada, and Florida, and we actually have ceilings as well as floors to try to satisfy as many people as possible.

Yesterday, we had a number of people come to the floor saying the formula was unfair. We took each State, State by State, which I am happy to do. We have the capability of doing it, again, to show that it is not unfair. We have a formula now and everyone benefits. There is no State that gets less than 10 percent more than they had before and it takes care of the problems.

The donor States have always been a problem. My State has been a donor State since the program began. So the fact that we will all end up with a 95-percent status is very significant.

We have never adequately handled the safety problems. We know about the deaths on the highway: 43,000 people each year dying on the highway. While the percentage has not gone up, the numbers have. We are addressing that.

The intermodal connections and freight movement were never adequately addressed by the previous bills. These are addressed.

Streamlining, so that many of the problems we have—some environmental, some other types of problems—can be dealt with more rapidly and in advance so we can keep the construction going.

We have the IPAM program that will take these programs that are ready to go and get them moving right away. If we are going to do it, do it now and get the people employed. A lot of people are concerned about jobs. Certainly there is no bigger job anywhere.

It has been a long process. I know some Members just do not want a bill, but we will get through the process. We will get a bill and get people back to work and rebuild the infrastructure.

We left off on section 1612. I will handle a couple of sections. The Senator from Missouri will arrive in about 5 minutes with some subjects to address.

Section 1613 is the improved inter-agency consultation.

Mr. GREGG. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. INHOFE. Yes.

Mr. GREGG. Does the Senator mind, after he finishes his statement, that I be allowed to speak?

Mr. INHOFE. Anyone who wants to speak so long as it is on the highway bill.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that after the completion of the statement of the Senator from Oklahoma, I have 5 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. I have completed my remarks and there is no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 2268 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2267

Mr. GREGG. I send an amendment to the desk which second degrees the amendment of Senator DORGAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. GREGG] proposes an amendment numbered 2268 to amendment No. 2267.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

This Act may be cited as the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE AND POLICY.

The Congress declares that the following is the policy of the United States:

(1) Labor-management relationships and partnerships are based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, bilateral consensual problem solving, and shared accountability. Labor-management cooperation fully utilizes the strengths of both parties to best serve the interests of the public, operating as a team, to carry out the public safety mission in a quality work environment. In many public safety agencies it is the union that provides the institutional stability as elected leaders and appointees come and go.

(2) The Federal Government needs to encourage conciliation, mediation, and voluntary arbitration to aid and encourage employers and their employees to reach and maintain agreements concerning rates of pay, hours, and working conditions, and to make all reasonable efforts through negotiations to settle their differences by mutual agreement reached through collective bargaining or by such methods as may be provided for in any applicable agreement for the settlement of disputes.

(3) The absence of adequate cooperation between public safety employers and employees has implications for the security of employees and can affect interstate and intrastate commerce. The lack of such labor-management cooperation can detrimentally impact the upgrading of police and fire services